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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 RIYADH 001388

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S/CT FOR BAVERILL
DEPT OF ENERGY PASS TO ADEALVAREZ

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TAGS: [EPET](#) [ENRG](#) [ECON](#) [PTER](#) [DHA](#) [SA](#)
SUBJECT: JOINT WORKING GROUP MARITIME TEAM DEBRIEFS SAUDI
COAST GUARD, HIGHLIGHTS AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

REF: SECSTATE

Classified By: ECONOMIC COUNSELOR BOB MURPHY FOR
REASONS 12958 1.4 B, D, AND E

Summary

1. (S) On June 23, an assessment team in Saudi Arabia from the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) debriefed members of the Saudi Coast Guard on a four-day visit to Coast Guard facilities at and near oil facilities in the Eastern Province. While the maritime team will present its formal recommendations to the Saudi Ministry of Interior (MOI) at the next JWG meeting in late August or early September, they highlighted key observations regarding Saudi Coast Guard capabilities to respond to possible terrorist threats. The team indicated the Saudi Coast Guard should improve their communication and integration with other government security forces, such as the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) and Saudi Aramco security. While the Saudi Coast Guard is charged with responding to maritime threats to oil infrastructure, it currently has no coastal radar in its command centers to allow it do so effectively. The team also highlighted the need for the Coast Guard to improve its maritime interdiction capabilities, and for the government to acquire a helicopter response capability. In sum, the team privately assessed there were significant deficiencies in the Coast Guard's ability to detect or interdict a serious terrorist threat to the Ras Tanura or Ras al Juaymah oil facilities.

Team Focused on Coast Guard Capabilities at
Ras Tanura and Ras Al Juaymah Oil facilities

2. (C) During four days in the Eastern Province, the team toured Coast Guard facilities and

command centers at the Jubail port, Ras Tanura and Ras Al Juaymah oil facilities, and Dammam port. The team also assessed Coast Guard capabilities during a day-long maritime tour of Ras Tanura and Ras Al Juaymah oil facilities. The maritime expert team included Coast Guard subject matter experts Randy Rhodes and Keith Karl. They were joined by Sandia National Laboratory representatives Dr. Susan Rhodes, Jack Jones, and Frank Gerdin. Diplomatic Security Agent (DS/ATA) Maloy led the delegation.

13. (C) Saudi Coast Guard Admiral Al Ghamdi, Assistant General Manager for Maritime Affairs, led the Saudi team present for the debriefing. His team included Coast Guard representatives Director for Naval Support Captain Radadi; Commander Al Zahrani, International Cooperation and Border Affairs; and officers from the training and information technology departments. Dr. Khalid al Ageel, Director of the Ministry of Interior's High Commission on Industrial Security, and the JWG's most frequent counterpart, was also present for the session.

Coast Guard Flying Blind Compared to
Navy, Saudi Aramco

14. (S) During the June 23 debriefing, the maritime team noted the limitations on Coast Guard capabilities, while also laying out some of its

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strengths. The team praised the extensive ability to detect threats via human visual detection, with Coast Guard personnel extensively deployed on vessels and Saudi Aramco security personnel on vessels and oil platforms. However, the Coast Guard has extremely limited awareness of its maritime domain, the area over which it exercises authority, especially compared to its partners in protecting Saudi oil infrastructure, the RSNF and Saudi Aramco. The Saudi Coast Guard has no coastal radar in its command centers to allow it to track its own or other vessels, including those with hostile intent. Instead, Coast Guard vessels radio in their positions at specific intervals. The Coast Guard, Navy, and Saudi Aramco have no shared radar or other common systems, and hence no common picture of the maritime domain or potential threats therein.

15. (S) The team also highlighted the need for the Coast Guard to improve its maritime interdiction capabilities and for the government to acquire a helicopter response capability. The maritime team assessed that the Coast Guard has limited training and exercises, and does not conduct any security team boarding of large commercial vessels to effect positive control upon approach to critical infrastructure.

16. (S) Finally, the team noted the inconsistent identification of critical components within Saudi Arabia's energy facilities. For example, Saudi Aramco and the Coast Guard representatives appeared to have inconsistent views as to the criticality of Ras Tanura's Sea Island and single point moorings (SPMs). While all interlocutors agreed these facilities perform an important function in loading crude oil, there were divergent views on Aramco's ability to quickly deploy workarounds if they were significantly damaged in an attack.

On-Going Procurement Should Address
Some Technology Gaps

¶17. (C) According to Admiral Al Ghamdi and his team, some of the gaps identified by the maritime team will be addressed by a major Border Guard package already under procurement by the MOI. For example, the Coast Guard is acquiring fifty fast speedboats and a coastal radar package, which should address its most severe technology deficiencies. However, the Coast Guard leadership often seemed unaware of major procurement efforts underway at the MOI, or if they would receive any new equipment or capabilities as a result.

¶18. (C) The Coast Guard leadership with whom the team interacted in the Eastern Province appeared to have had no input into defining their needs before major acquisitions of new equipment. For example, the MOI is acquiring up to 40 Sikorsky helicopters for the Civil Defense Aviation Command. The Coast Guard leadership, including Admiral Al Ghamdi, appeared unaware of this acquisition, or how it might impact their operations. The officers generally indicated they put their faith in their leadership to know what sort of capabilities they needed to acquire.

Coast Guard: Urgent Need for Better Training

¶10. (SBU) All of the Coast Guard officers present at the debriefing conveyed the request for more training. They were keenly interested in potential

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training offered by the US Coast Guard, DS/ATA, and Sandia Labs. The JWG team provided some examples of training offered by these institutions, and asked the Saudi Coast Guard to funnel formal training requests via the JWG. Admiral Al Ghamdi invited the JWG team to tour the Coast Guard training facilities in the near future, and to discuss possible training cooperation.

Comment

¶11. (S) A JWG maritime team assessed Saudi Aramco's maritime capabilities in March. The contrast with the Coast Guard command centers could not have been more striking. Saudi Aramco's port control center was filled with state of the art radar systems and computers. Even then, extensive equipment upgrades were underway. Saudi Aramco's Head of Industrial Security has essentially told us the Coast Guard is not welcome in his port control facility. Of course, Saudi Aramco's security forces carry only personal weapons, and are not prepared to interdict a terrorist threat. That is left to the Saudi Coast Guard. Unfortunately, the Coast Guard appears to have little realistic ability to detect a threat in the area of Saudi Aramco's key facilities at Ras Tanura and Ras Al Juaymah, and so to mount a timely response.
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